

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 SAM-01 SAB-01 ACDA-10 SCCT-01

SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5746

USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, PFOR, XF, US

SUBJ: LOCAL PRESS PLAY OF NYT ARTICLE ON "SEALS"

1. SUMMARY: NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE ON "SEAL" COMMANDO UNITS REPORTEDLY BEING TRAINED FOR ANTI-TERRORIST DUTIES IN CERTAIN COUNTRIS, SUMMARIZED BY INTERNATIONAL WIRE SERVICES, HAS CAUSED UPROAR IN LOCAL LEFTIST PRESS. LEADING LEFTIST PRO-PLO "AL-MUHARRIR" CHARGES THAT ARAB REGION MAY HAVE TO FACE "NEW KIND OF AMERICAN OCCUPATION EMANATING FROM AMERICAN EMBASSIES IN AREA". LEFTIST PRO-FEDAYEEN "AL-LIWA" SIMILARLY CHARGES THAT ACTION IS DIRECTED AGAINST ARAB COMMANDOS AND THEIR LEADERS AND THAT LEBANON-- BY IMPLICATION AMEMBASSY--WILL BE FIRST STAGING POINT FOR THSES "SEALS". IN ABSENCE OF FULL TEXT OF NYT ACTICLE AND QUIDANCE FROM WASHINGTON, MISSION IS RESTRICTING ITSELF TO STATING THAT IT KNOWS OF NO PLANS TO INCREASE ITS STAFF AT PRESENT AND REFERRING QUERIES ON ARTICLE TO WASHINGTON. END SUMMARY.

2. "AL-MUHARRIR" PLAYS UP NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE ON "SEAL" COMMANDO UNITS UNDER BANNER HEADLINES: "WHAT IS U.S. PLOTTING FOR REGION AND FOR LEBANON? 2500 COMMANDOS TO BE SENT BY UNCLASSIFIED

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AMERICA TO HELP GOVERNMENTS IN STRIKING REVOLUTIONARIES AND

FEDAYEEN: COMMANDOS ARE TRAINED IN COUNTER-TERRORISM AND ABDUCTION OF LEADERS AND WILL WORK INSIDE AMEMBASSIES IN COOPERATION WITH CIA". IN INTRODUCTION TO NYT ARTICLE, PAPER ALLEGES: "IT IS LIKELY THAT ARAB NATION AND OTHER COUNTRIES REBELLING AGAINST AMERICAN TUTELAGE IN ALL PARTS OF WORLD ARE ABOUT TO FACE NEW KIND OF AMERICAN OCCUPATION EMANATING FROM AMEMBASSIES, WHICH WILL BE TRANSFORMED INTO MINI-BASES TO STRIKE REVOLUTIONARIES AND FEDAYEEN AND ABDUCT THEIR LEADERS".

3. "AL-LIWA" BANNERS SAME NYT ARTICLE: "AMERICA PROVIDES ITS EMBASSIES IN MIDEAST WITH EXPERTS IN ABDUCTION AND COUNTER-FEDAYEEN MEASURES." IN ITS INTRODUCTION TO ARTICLE, PAPER ASSERTS THAT "NYT REPORT HAS GENERATED GREAT INTEREST AMONG NATIONALIST AND PROGRESSIVE FORCES IN LEBANON. SOURCES IN THESE FORCES DESCRIBE NEW AMERICAN STEP AS PART OF SURRENDERIST PLOT THAT U.S. IS TRYING TO IMPOSE ON REGION IN COLLUSION WITH ISRAEL. THESE SOURCES OBSERVE THAT REPORT EMPHASIZED THAT PRINCIPAL AIM OF SENDING COMMANDOS IS TO COUNTER TERRORISM (I.E. FEDAYEEN ACTION), ABDUCT LEADERS OF FEDAYEEN AND REVOLUTIONARIES, AND GIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ADVICE IN COUNTER-INSURGENCY. THESE SOURCES SAID IT IS CLEAR THAT AMERICAN STEP IS AIMED PRINCIPALLY AGAINST LEBANON BECAUSE OF IT NATURE AS AN OPEN COUNTRY INWHICH CIA CAN DO WHAT IT WANTS AND AS A SENSITIVE CENTER AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME".

4. IN ABSENCE OF FULL TEXT OF NYT ARTICLE AND OF BACKGROUND ON ITS ORIGINS AND ACCURACY, AND IN ABSENCE OF GUIDANCE FROM WASHINGTON, MISSION HAS REPLIED TO REPEATED QUERIES FROM AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS BY STATING THAT IT KNOWS OF NO PLANS TO INCREASE ITS STAFF AT PRESENT AND THAT SPECIFIC QUERIES ON NYT REPORT, ON WHICH IT KNOWS NOTHING, SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN. IF AT TODAY'S NOON BRIEFING SPOKESMAN MAKES AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT DENYING OR CLARIFYING NYT REPORT, MISSION WOULD APPRECIATE PROMPT TELEGRAPHIC NOTICE.
GODLEY

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